

"Songs In The Night: Song Of Immanuel!"

Text: Isaiah 7:14, "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

(Story of poor ragged boy and being Christ child in disguise)

(Several years ago a news item appeared in the newspaper that told of a 10 year old girl who was running down a main highway, without any clothes on, screaming for help and no one would stop. The story of the ragged little boy ~~xxxxx~~ who turned out to be the Christ child is only a legend. The story of the 10 year old girl is true. But what a strange parallel between the two. Somehow I cannot help but think that we like to hear nice little stories that make us feel good and tell us wonderful little moral lessons, but when it comes to confronting things in real life, we turn away from what we should do. I cannot help but believe that many of the people who passed the little girl by were people who called themselves Christians.

What do you suppose the outcome of the plan of God would have been had Mary said to the angel of the Lord, "Look, I don't care to have my body used as a means to do something for God. Let Him get someone else and let me alone. I don't care to get involved." Probably God would have found someone more worthy to bear His Son, but the point of all of this is that Mary was willing to be used of God, for His purpose. She was willing to get involved.

In the ⁷~~4~~th chapter of Isaiah we read of this plan of God being set in motion almost 8 centuries before it actually took place. Isaiah wrote, "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." He was saying that sometime in the future God was going to intervene into the affairs of man, and He was going to come to earth in the form of a human being. The real significance of all of this was that God was going to do something that was impossible to do, He was going to make a virgin conceive. Now biblical scholars of all kinds have taken this verse and they have changed it and they have altered its meaning, they have tried to have people believe it in all kinds of different ways, simply because it is a biological impossibility for a virgin to conceive. But what is overlooked

in all of this is that this is the workings of God. It is not a man and a woman sitting down together and ~~discussing the~~ planning to have a family. It is not the normal way of doing things at all. It is God's plan, God's method, and God's intervention into the world. The virgin birth of Jesus came about by the infinite mind and wisdom of Almighty God.

This is an issue that has been the cause of much controversy in the present day Christian Church. There are those who tell us that we need not believe this prophecy because it could not have happened as stated. There are those who tell us that it is unnecessary to cling to such old-fashioned beliefs. Surprisingly a goodly portion of the clergy do not believe in the Virgin Birth. I do not know what the present day statistics are, but

But let us look at this event as it is ~~portrayed~~ portrayed in Luke's Gospel. As the angel of the Lord, identified as Gabriel visits Mary at her home in Nazareth, Mary is not only surprised by this visit, but she is troubled by his greeting to her. We can understand why she would be surprised, because it is not every day that an angel of God appeared to individuals. We can also understand ~~xxxx~~ why she was troubled if we ~~place ourselves in her~~ try to visualize how we would react in similar circumstances. If suddenly we were confronted with a messenger of the Lord, in the form of another being, most of us would be severely frightened I am sure.

Well this is the situation Mary found herself in, and along with her surprise at this unexpected turn of events, she hears some things that are rather unnerving to say the least. She is told that she is highly favored, the Lord is with her, and she is blessed among women. ~~xxxxbigxxxxxxfor~~ ~~Maryxxxxxx~~ Gabriel then explains to Mary what is going to take place. He tells her she is going to conceive a child to be named Jesus, and this child will be the Son of the Highest, which was God, and that he was going to be a king and rule over a kingdom that was unending.

Again, Mary is puzzled because this would place her in ~~xxxxxx~~ a bad light as far as Joseph was concerned. If she suddenly turns up pregnant, Joseph is not going to marry her. The KJV says she was espoused to Joseph,

and the RSV says betrothed, while the Living Bible says engaged. ~~This is~~ Mary's concern here was legitimate, because in the law of the Jews, being betrothed or engaged was as binding as marriage. The betrothal lasted for a year, and even though ~~they~~ the couple did not engage in physical contact, the betrothal could only be ~~broken~~ dissolved by divorce. If the man to whom a woman was betrothed should happen to die, the woman was called a widow. Once two people were betrothed only death could break the bond, or in rare cases a divorce. We read in the first chapter of Matthew that Joseph was concerned about Mary being pregnant and wanted to divorce her privately, but again an Angel of the Lord appeared to him and assured him that all was well, and that he should marry Mary. Knowing this then, we can readily understand Mary's reluctance to hear the news of the Angel Gabriel.

~~But the one portion of this scripture that really~~ Now this in essence is the account of how Mary came to be with child by the Holy Spirit. The trend for the past decade or more has been to de-emphasize this virgin birth theory. Biblical scholars have been playing it down and taking it out of the ~~extra~~ miraculous and placing it in the realm of the ordinary. A large segment of the clergy no longer believe in the Virgin Birth. Personally I cannot understand how anyone can deliberately profess their faith using the Apostles Creed, and state they believe in the Virgin Birth, when they do not. To me this is blasphemy. I believe that Jesus Christ was indeed born of the Virgin Mary, ^{just} ^{explained} because it is ~~stated~~ in this portion of scripture how it all came about, but because of one short little verse further on in this Scripture. In the 37th verse of Matthew chapter 1 we read, "For with God nothing shall be impossible." This would lead me to believe that if God wanted it to snow purple snow, He would do it. And if He wanted His Son to be born in a different way in order for Him to be unique and set Him apart from the rest of us, then God could impregnate a woman and make her conceive while she was still a virgin.

To me it is very basic and very simple and something I believe that God can do and accomplish. It is as simple as the little boy who said there were two

virgins in the Bible. "The Virgin Mary, and the King James Virgin." Or like another boy who drew a nativity scene in school ~~xx~~ when the teacher told the class to draw what Christmas meant to them. She looked at his paper and he had drawn ~~another child~~ very visibly Mary, Joseph and the baby. But he had also drawn a rather fat looking individual and the teacher asked about it, and he replied, "That Round John Virgin, like we sing about in Silent Night." Both of these boys may have been a little mistaken in their theology, but at least they were on the right track.

One thing we do not read of Mary and that is she had doubts. Perhaps she did, but it is not recorded. Many times we do not take our roles in life seriously enough and when we become involved in a project or find ourselves in the middle of it we say, "Boy if I had only known what I was letting myself in for I would not have tackled this job." It is a safe bet that Mary must have had mixed emotions many times during those months of her pregnancy. But regardless of her mixed emotions, she saw her chosen role through. And what a contrast she is to most of us, for we can only see so far and either cannot or refuse to see any farther. Edwin Markham tells of a cobbler who was much like this:

(Illustration Cobbler and Jesus coming as guest.)

Mary, not completely knowing or understanding her role, brought Him into the world and raised Him, and shared Him with all the world. Which proves again that we never completely know when what we are doing or saying, may be done or said to or for Christ Himself.

We go through the same Scriptures each year and we sing the same songs, and I often wonder how often it is merely mechanics that we are going through. But if we truly seek to enter into the experience of the Christ child coming anew into our lives and into the world, it can be a totally new experience.

But we must be careful that we do not call upon God to come into the world as the ancient Jews, and then not recognize Him when He appears on the scene. We sing the "Songs In The Night," but too often we sing them without expecting God to appear in that Babe of Bethlehem.

A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

) ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA
FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT DECEMBER 1, 1974
REV. RALPH C. LINK, PASTOR
MRS. WALLACE FEDER, ORGANIST
MR. RALPH COOPER, CHORUS DIRECTOR
GORDON KENNEDY, JEFF CAMPBELL - ACOLYTES

ORDER OF WORSHIP 11:00 A.M.
PRELUDE MUSIC: "WINDS THROUGH OLIVE TREES" REES
"NAZARETH" GOUNOD

SILENT PRAYER
*PROCESSIONAL HYMN No. 93 "ARISE, THE KINGDOM IS AT HAND"
*ASCRPTION - CHORAL AMEN
*EXHORTATION
*CONFESSION (IN UNISON) "ETERNAL GOD, IN WHOM WE LIVE AND MOVE AND HAVE OUR BEING, WHOSE FACE IS HIDDEN FROM US BY OUR SINS, AND WHOSE MERCY WE FORGET IN THE BLINDNESS OF OUR HEARTS; CLEANSE US, WE BEGEECH THEE, FROM ALL OUR OFFENSES, AND DELIVER US FROM PROUD THOUGHTS AND VAIN DESIRES; THAT WITH LOWLINESS AND MECKNESS WE MAY DRAW NEAR TO THEE; CONFESSING OUR FAULTS, CONFIDING IN THY GRACE, AND FINDING IN THEE OUR REFUGE AND OUR STRENGTH, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST THY SON, AMEN."
*KYRIE (CHOIR, CONGREGATION AND PASTOR)
*ASSURANCE OF PAROON - CHORAL AMEN
*PRAISE
*PASTOR: "O LORD OPEN OUR LIPS."
*PEOPLE: AND OUR MOUTH SHALL SHOW FORTH THY PRAISE
*DOXOLOGY No. 551
SCRIPTURE LESSON: LUKE 1: 26-38
LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLE
HYMN No. 104 "ANGELS, FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY"
*AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH (APOSTLES' CREED)
*GLORIA PATRI
*CALL TO PRAYER
*PASTOR: THE LORD BE WITH YOU.
*PEOPLE: AND WITH THY SPIRIT.
*PASTOR: LET US PRAY.
*PRAYER AND PRAYER RESPONSE
OFFERING
OFFERTORY: "THE VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS" SCOTT
SOLO BY VON MALONEY

HANGING OF GREENS - DARRYL MASTER, DAVID VENBEL,
BRADLEY AMOR, GREG BOSKO AND RANDY CELLEN.
ANTHEM: "ALONG THE OLDER CHRISTMAS ROAD" WILSON
SERMON: "SONGS IN THE NIGHT: SONG OF EMMANUEL"
PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER
*HYMN OF DEDICATION No. 88 "O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL"
*BENEDICTION AND THREE FOLD AMEN
ORGAN POSTLUDE: "FOREVER THINE" FRICK
- - - - - *CONGREGATION STANDING - - - - -
THE LOVELY FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR HAVE BEEN PLACED BY
MR. & MRS. FRANCIS H. MAXWELL IN MEMORY OF "LOVED ONES"
SERVING AS USHERS TODAY ARE: "ALLEN BOTACCHI, JOHN
REDMAN, DAN BOSKO, ROBERT KNAUER AND CHARLES PENAR.
ELDER AND MRS. PAUL CAMPBELL WILL REPRESENT COUNCIL
AT THE DOOR TODAY.
THE ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY WAS 237.
NURSERY WILL BE PROVIDED TODAY BY: MRS. SHARON
STAUFFER AND LAUREL STAUFFER.
MONDAY - 7:30 - WOMEN'S MARY PRUGH CIRCLE MEETING
WED. - 7:30 - CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
THURS. - NEWSLETTER WILL BE PUBLISHED - PLEASE HAVE
ALL MATERIAL IN BY WEDNESDAY.
THE NEW ADVENT WREATH WHICH IS BEING USED FOR THE FIRST
WAS A GIFT FROM MR. & MRS. JOHN CHUHRA - MR. CHUHRA
WAS A FORMER MEMBER - NOW RESIDING IN KANSAS CITY.
POINSETTA CHART AND FLOWER CHART WILL BE SENT AROUND
TODAY - PRICES ARE STILL NOT AVAILABLE FOR POINSETTA'S,
FLOWERS ARE \$8.00 AS OF NOW.
THE PRICE EFFECTIVE ON THE BIBLES WITH THE COUPONS
IS GOOD UNTIL DEC. 25, HOWEVER, YOU CANNOT EXPECT
TO GET THEM BEFORE CHRISTMAS IF THEY ARE NOT ORDERED
SHORTLY.
BASKETBALL SIGN-UP SHEET IS IN THE NARTHEX ON THE
BULLETIN BOARD, OR YOU CAN SIGN UP IN THE OFFICE NOW.
THE LOVE, KINDNESS AND THOUGHTFULNESS SHOWN TO US BY
THE MEMBERS OF OUR CHURCH HAS BEEN VERY MUCH
APPRECIATED. THANK YOU - MR. & MRS. W. W. PFABE.
TONIGHT - 7:00-8:00 - YOUTH CHOIR PRACTICE
MRS. RALPH DREHER WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THOSE WHO
VISITED HER, SENT CARDS AND PRAYERS. SHE WOULD ALSO
LIKE TO THANK REV. LINK AND BROTHER COOPER.
TUES. BIBLE STUDY HAS BEEN CHANGED TO THURS. EVENINGS
AT THE CHURCH FOR THOSE WHO WERE UNABLE TO ATTEND TUES.
AND MAYBE FIND IT MORE CONVENIENT.

THE HANGING OF THE GREENS

(THE ORGANIST PLAYS CHRISTMAS MUSIC SOFTLY DURING THE FOLLOWING):
THE HANGING OF THE GREENS: THE EVERGREEN, THE HOLLY, THE MISTLETOE, THE STAR, THE BELLS.

MINISTER: WE'RE BRINGING IN THE CHRISTMAS GREENS FOR CHRISTMAS ~~THE~~ IS HERE! *BRING! HEAR!*
WE'RE BRINGING HOLLY, SPRUCE, AND PINE
TO HANG UPON THE WALLS AND SHINE
WITH CHRISTMAS LOVE AND CHEER.

WE'RE COMING WITH THE CEDAR BOUGHS!
WE'RE BRINGING CHRISTMAS IN!
AND ALL THE CHILDREN HERE AND THERE
AROUND THE WORLD AND EVERYWHERE
ARE SINGING CHRISTMAS IN.

EVERYWHERE, IN HOMES AND IN CHURCHES, WE HANG THE CHRISTMAS GREENS. BUT IN OUR MERRIMENT AND JOY WE CALL TO MIND THE MEANING OF EACH ONE. THEY ARE NOT MERE TRADITIONS, BUT SYMBOLS TO REMIND US OF THE GIFT OF GOD IN HIS SON.

THE EVERGREENS

(AS THE READER BEGINS THIS SELECTION, THE EVERGREEN BEARERS COME DOWN THE AISLE OF THE CHURCH). (THEY CARRY VASES OR BUNCHES OF PINE, CEDAR, SPRUCE OR ANY EVERGREENS.)

MINISTER: BRING IN THE GREENS, THE PINE, THE FIR, THE CEDAR, — ALL ARE A PART OF CHRISTMAS JOY. THEIR SPICY FRAGRANCE AND EVERGREEN REMIND US EVEN WHEN ALL IS BARREN OF THE PROMISED REAWAKENING OF THE SANCTUARY WITH THE BOUGHS OF EVERGREEN AS A PROMISE OF THE NEW LIFE AND A SIGN OF THE HOPE THAT IN CHRIST ALL LIVE FOREVER.

(WHEN THE EVERGREEN BEARERS ARRIVE AT THE CHANCEL THEY STAND REVERENTLY UNTIL THE READER HAS FINISHED. THEN THE READER PLACES THE GREENS ON THE ALTAR OR THE BEARERS THEMSELVES PLACE THEM APPROPRIATELY. AFTER THE GREENS HAVE BEEN PLACED THE BEARERS RETURN TO THE CHANCEL STEPS.)

1.

MINISTER: THE GLORY OF LEBANON SHALL COME UNTO THEE, THE FIR TREE, THE PINE TREE, AND THE BOX TOGETHER, TO BEAUTIFY THE PLACE OF THY SANCTUARY.

(THE EVERGREEN BEARERS TURN AND TAKE SEATS IN THE FRONT OF THE CHURCH.)

THE HOLLY

(THE HOLLY BEARER COMES DOWN THE AISLE. HE CARRIES A LARGE HOLLY WREATH.)

MINISTER: GLEAMING BRIGHTLY IN THE LIGHT OF CHRISTMAS CANDLES THE GLISTENING LEAVES AND BRIGHT BERRIES OF THE HOLLY REMIND US OF THE JOY AND HAPPINESS THAT COMES TO MANKIND AS WE REMEMBER THE BIRTH OF GOD'S SON. AS WE HEAR AGAIN THE WORDS OF THE OLD CAROL, WE KNOW THAT CHRIST WAS BORN FOR US.

(THE HOLLY BEARER PLACES THE WREATH, THEN RETURNS TO THE CHANCEL STEPS).

MINISTER: THE HOLLY AND THE IVY, WHEN THEY ARE BOTH FULL-GROWN

OF ALL THE TREES THAT ARE IN THE WOOD,

THE HOLLY BEARS THE CROWN.

THE HOLLY BEARS A BERRY, AS RED AS ANY BLOOD.

AND MARY BORE SWEET JESUS, TO DO POOR SINNERS GOOD.

THE MISTLETOE

(THE HOLLY BEARER LEAVES AND THE MISTLETOE BEARER STARTS DOWN THE AISLE. SHE CARRIES A LARGE SPRAY OF MISTLETOE TIED WITH SILVER AND GREEN RIBBON.)

MINISTER: THE MISTLETOE HAS BECOME FOR US THE SIGN OF MERRIMENT SYMBOLIZED BY THE KISS; BUT, IN ANCIENT TIME, TWO WARRIORS MEETING UNDER THE MISTLETOE, THREW DOWN THEIR ARMS. THUS, IT BECAME A CUSTOM AMONG THE CHRISTIANS TO PLACE A SPRAY OF MISTLETOE UPON THE ALTAR AT CHRISTMAS TIME AS A REMINDER OF THE PEACE OF GOD AND OF THE POWER OF CHRIST TO HEAL THE HURTS OF THE BODY AND SOUL.

(Star bearer)

Minister: The star has become for us a sign that that announced the birth of that baby in Bethlehem. For years people sought this sign and when it did come it was shared with the common people, as well as with royalty.

2.

"O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal
beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy
perfect Light.

(Bell bearer)

Minister: The bells are a sign of that which rings o
out the joy that once again God has come to dwell
among men. God has provided for the salvation of
mankind and what better way to proclaim this than
with the pealing of bells of all sizes and descrip-
tions.

"I heard the bells on Christmas day their old
familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet, the words repeat of peace on
earth, good will to men.

When pealed the bells more loud and deep, "
God is not dead nor doth he sleep,
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men."

Again M puzzl Bcause place her own life on.

If she turn up preg, Jos no marry
KJV say, espoused, RSV betrothed, Liv Bib engaged
M'S concern legit Bcause law Jews, betrothed
engaged, same as marriage

Betroth last 1yr/ couple no engaged phys contact
& only dissolved death/divorce
If man die, woman called widow

In 1st chap Matt Jos concern M & want divorce,
ang of L. appear him/assure all well, should marry
Knowing this, can understand M reluct hear news Gab

This essence acct bow M came B with child of HSp
Trend last decade so, de-emp virg birth theory
His schols play dwn take out realm mirac, place
realm ordinary
Large eeg. clergy no believe virg birth

Personal I no understand any1 profess faith apos cre-
state believe virg birth, & do not.

2 me this blasphemy
I believe virg birth, not just Bcause all expl this
portion scrip how came about,
but Bcause one short vs later on in chap,
37th ve, "For with G nothing shall B impossible."
This lead me believe G want do anything impos,
He do.

Want create purple snow, He do
He want son horn diff way, He do.
Reason: Je 2B unique/set apart/out of ordinary.
G can impregnate virg/make conceive if He choose

2 me very basic & simple & G can accomplish it
(Illustration 2 boys stories)
Both may been little mistaken theol, but on rt track

1 thing no read of M, she had doubt, perhaps did, but no record
Many times we no take our roles seriously enuf,
we get in project & say, "If I had only known I
would not have tackled this job."
It safe bet M had mixed emot during mths preg.
But regardless emot she saw role thru

And what contrast most us
4 we only C so far & either cannot or will not C
further

Edwin Markham tell cobbler like this
(Illustration cobbler & Je coming as guest)
M not comply know role or understand brot Him
in2 world/raised Him/shared Him with world

"Songs In The Night: Song Of Immanuel!"

Text: Isaiah 7:14,
"hold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and
I call his name immanuel."

Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

Story poor ragged boy being Christ child

10 yr girl run down street

1 story true, 1 false

strange parallel tween 2

We prob like hear nice stories, make feel good

& tell moral lessons,

but many times in real life these lessons no use

10 yr girl good examp.

What outcome plan of G if Mary "Look, I no care use
my body this way. Let me alone, get someone else?"

God prob find some1 else,
but point is, Mary willing B used by G/willing get
involved.

7th chap Is, read plan G be set motion (read text)

He was say/sometime futur G intervene affairs men
come earth form human being

real signif all this G going do impossible

He make virgin conceive

Bib echols all kinds change verse, alter meaning etc

try make peop believe all diff ways,

all Bcause it phys/biolog impos 2 take place

But that all overlook, this work of G

Not man/woman sit down discuss family planning

It not normal way do things at all

It G's plan/G's method/G's intervent in world

Virg birth Js by infin mind/wisdom Al. G.

Lets look Luke account of event in his Gosp

Ang/Gab visit Mary in Nazareth

She surprised/troubled as well

Surprise Bcause no everyday have ang visit

Can understand troubled if try visualize how we
would react same circum

If sudden we confront by mess. of L as ang,
most us severely frightened I sure

This sit M find self in, along with surprise hears
some unerving thing, 2 say least

He told hily favored/L with her/blesses among women

ab explain she have baby/name Js/2 B Son most Hi
this God/He 2 B King rule unending kingdom

which prove again we never complly know when what 3
we do or say, may be done for Xp Himself

W^r go thru same scrips ea yr
& sing same songs, & I often wonder how often it just
mechanics we go thru

But if truly seek enter in2 experience of Xp child
come anew into lives,
it can B total new experience

But must B careful no call upon G 2 come in2 world
as ancient Jews, & then no recognize when He appear
on scene.

We sing our Songs In The Night,
but 2 often we sing without expect G 2 appear in
that Babe of Bethlehem.

We sing, (O Come, O Come Immanuel)

Let us not only sing 4 coming of Immanuel, G with us,
but let us know He has indeed come,
& may He live in each of our lives as our Lord and
Saviour Js Xp.

Come, let us this Advent season go even unto Bethlehe
to see this thing which has come to pass, which the
Lord has made known unto us.

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)



SEP 56







Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.